

DUDLEY HOUSE
MADISON WISCONSIN
Dane Co.

H.A.B.S. No WIS234

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MEASURED DRAWINGS

~~PHOTOGRAPHS~~ • none

WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA
DISTRICT No 28

Historic American Building Survey
Alexander C. Guth • District Officer
1249 North Franklin Place, Milwaukee, Wis.

DUDLEY HOUSE
Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin

Owner (or Custodian). German House Holding Company.

Date of Erection. 1852 - 1860 (second floor completed after
Civil War.)

Architect. Not known

Builder. William Dudley

Present Condition. Fair

Number of Storiss. Two

Materials of Construction. Local buff sandstone.

Other Existing Records. Abstract of Titles: Doty Quit-Claim Dssd,
May 1, 1836. U. S. Patent, Doty and Mason,
August 10, 1837, filed Oct. 16, 1849 - et. ssq.
(See text).

Additional Data. (See following pages)

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The Dudley House was built on a piece of land that extended along Frances Street from State Street to Langdon Street, Madison, Wisconsin. The front faced State Street, but the house is now entered from what was originally the side street. The address is now designated Number 508 North Frances Street.

Even before the U. S. Government issued land grants in Wisconsin Territory, James D. Doty, on May 1st, 1836, executed a quit-claim deed on certain lands including the property on which the Dudley House now stands. On May 28th of the same year, a S. T. Mason gave power of attorney to Doty, "to divide, lay off or otherwise dispose of my interest in certain lands jointly owned by said Doty and myself at or near the Four Lakes of Wisconsin." A United States patent dated August 10, 1837, grants the land to Doty and Mason, though this deed was not filed until October 16, 1849.

Further perusal of the abstract that gave the above information tells that in 1852 William Dudley acquired a piece of land in what was then the village of Madison for \$400.00. On this land between 1852 and February 25, 1860, Dudley built his house. On the latter date the sheriff of Dane County conveyed the property to Marshall, Ellis and Ilsley. These men were Wisconsin's

first bankers and were chartered to operate at Madison in 1852.

William Dudley was a merchant and conducted a general store. He was recognized as a leader in the community. During the year April 1859 to April 1860, he was alderman of the city of Madison. It was the depression of 1857 that affected the affairs of Mr. Dudley: not only did he find difficulty in paying his taxes, but he was forced to abandon the work on his house. It was not until after the Civil War that the second floor was finished, which accounts for the different door and window trim employed. By 1874 William Dudley had improved his circumstances to such an extent that he was able to buy land adjoining his property for \$500.00.

On the death of William Dudley all real estate of the deceased was left to his son Charles L. Dudley, who died about 1883, his widow occupying the house for some time after. Since then it has changed hands many times. For a while it was the home of a school for boys. It served at one time as a club house, and at other times it was a rooming and boarding house. At the present time it is held by the German House Holding Company and known as the "Deutsches Haus" and is the home of a sorority who major in German at the

University of Wisconsin.

About the time that the City of Madison was organized in 1856, the town experienced a great building boom. The City Hall was being built and work was going on at the State Capitol. The Dudley House is one of a dozen or more large stone residences of this period. Because of the peculiar topography of the city, being situated as it is between a number of lakes, it developed in such a way that these old-timers are for the most part still standing. They are, indeed, a credit to the city, all being sturdily built and possessing a rugged classic style peculiar to the locality.

It is interesting to note that the local building stone, except where quite recently employed by way of quoins and other incidental features, an occasional foundation and as veneer over several new frame residences, was not generally used after the old boom referred to. Thus, a stone residence in Madison is either from a time just prior to the Civil War or very new. To discover the probable reason for this one must examine the stone. It is a fine-grained, light colored, buff sand-stone. It lends itself to cutting and carving splendidly - but it erodes rapidly. Under the porch roofs and other projections on the Dudley House the surfaces are just as fresh and crisp as they were when the stone-cutter produced them. Exposed

architectural detail is so badly eroded that the remaining rounded blobs give but little indication as to the original form. Presumably a combination of the effects of the 1857 depression and the discovery that the material was not as entirely satisfactory as earlier conclusions would have it, resulted in the discontinuance of its use from the Civil War times until just recently. Undoubtedly there were stone buildings built locally before the great boom; however, probably none of these had carved or cut surfaces on which the eroding tendency of the material might have been discovered.

The Dudley House recommends itself, not because it was the scene of important historical events, but because its style is a distinct contribution to American Architecture.

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District Officer.

Written by

Hugo Logemann

Revised 1936 H.C.F.